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Message Text

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46
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 H-02 OMB-01 /040 W
---------- 128503
R 080945Z AUG 75
FM AMCONSUL DURBAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2010
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS DURBAN 0279

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJ: SENATOR WINCHESTER JOINS PROGRESSIVE REFORM PARTY

REF: CAPE TOWN 182, 174

1. ERIC WINCHESTER, LIBERAL SENATOR FROM NATAL, FORMALLY RESIGNED FROM UNITED PARTY (UP) AND JOINED NEW PROGRESSIVE REFORM PARTY (PRP) AUGUST 7. EXPLAINING MOVE, WINCHESTER SAID "FUTURE DECISIONS OF UP ARE CERTAIN TO BE INFLUENCED BY THOSE WHOSELIEWS HAVE BECOME NOT DISSIMILAR FROM THOSE OF NATIONAL PARTY". WINCHESTER PREDICTED OTHER LIBERALS STILL IN UP WOULD BE UNSUCCESSFUL IN HALTING RIGHTWARD DRIFT OF UP AND THAT PARTY WILL REMAIN IN TURMOIL. DESPITE CALLS BY UP SPOKESMEN FOR WINCHESTER TO RESIGN SENATE SEAT, IT APPEARS HE WILL REMAIN, BECOMING PRP'S FIRST SENATOR.

2. PRP OFFICIALS HAVE GREETED WINCHESTER'S SWITCH WITH ENTHUSIASM. BOTH COLIN EGLIN AND RAY SWART, NATIONAL CHAIRMAN OF PRP, SAID THEY WERE DELIGHTED WINCHESTER DECIDED TO JOIN NEW PARTY. INITIAL REACTION FROM NATAL BLACK LEADERS ALSO HIGHLY FAVORABLE.

3. COMMENT: WINCHESTER'S DECISION TO JOIN PRP PT REALLY SURPRISING. HIS LIBERALISM ALWAYS SOMETHING OF AN ANOMALY
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IN BASICALLY CONSERVATIVE UP--EVEN MORE SO SINCE DEPARTURE

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OF SCHWARTZ AND "REFORM CAUCUS" FROM UP IN FEBRUARY (REFTELS).
WINCHESTER HAS BEEN GOING THROUGH SERIOUS POLITICAL
"IDENTITY CRISIS" FOR YEAR OR MORE BUT, UNTIL NOW, UNABLE
MAKE PERMANENT BREAK WITH UP. THOUGH WINCHESTER'S ACTION
LIKELY TO PERSUADE SEVERALOTHER LIBERALS IN NATAL UP TO
MOVE TO PRP, IT UNLIKELY HE WILL START STAMPEDE IN THIS
UP STRONGHOLD.
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